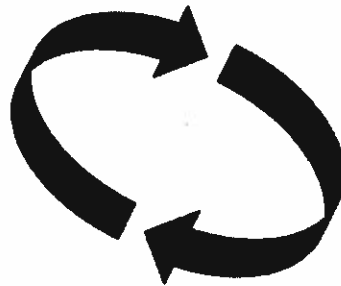


Reflective Learning

The concept of reflective learning has been around since Plato's directive, "know thyself," potentially a lifetime investigation. An outcome of this learning is self-knowledge. In modern times, prominent educator John Dewey is credited with starting the dialogue about reflective learning. Interpretations of his basic ideas are found in the frameworks presented in the ORGL seminars - David Kolb, Fiddler & Marienau, Kegan & Lahey, Korthagen & Vasalos, Sullivan & Rosen, etc. These frameworks all involve the same process of reflecting on behavior and using such feedback to learn and modify behavior - the quality improvement process for a developing leader or for a team.

The reflective learning cycle is the centerpiece of the process for learning teamwork and leadership, as well as for organizational renewal. The process is the same, whether the "system" is the individual, team or organization. The fundamental cycle is a continuous learning loop that includes:

- reflection,
- interpretation,
- application,
- engagement



(You will note the different authors in the ORGL seminars use different terms).

Reflective Learning for Professionals

Reflective practice is used to promote independent professionals who are continuously engaged in the reflection of situations they encounter in their professional worlds.

The concept of reflective practice is based on the idea of lifelong learning in which a practitioner analyzes experiences in order to learn from them. Reflective learning emphasizes that learning derives from our experiences as well as the knowledge that we gain from studying. It involves applying knowledge to experiences to create new learning. Reflective learning is also termed *experiential learning* and is often associated with work-based learning. In the ORGL seminars you will use reflective learning to assess your strengths and weaknesses and identify areas of improvement that you want to develop further.

Many assignments in the ORGL seminars involve retelling or looking back on experiences. When retelling/rethinking about events we are better able to categorize events, emotions, ideas, etc. and are able to link our intended purpose with the actions that we carried out. In this way, we remove ourselves and our direct emotional attachment from an action, and look at it from a critical standpoint. In other words, we take ourselves out of the action and view a sequence of events from afar using critical thinking.

Organizational Leadership and Reflective Learning

Experience Involves Feedback ... from Event ... to Attention... to Experience... to Reflection... to New Learning

Here is another diagram from Fiddler and Marienau that shows how our previous learning is always already influencing and shaping how we see new experiences.

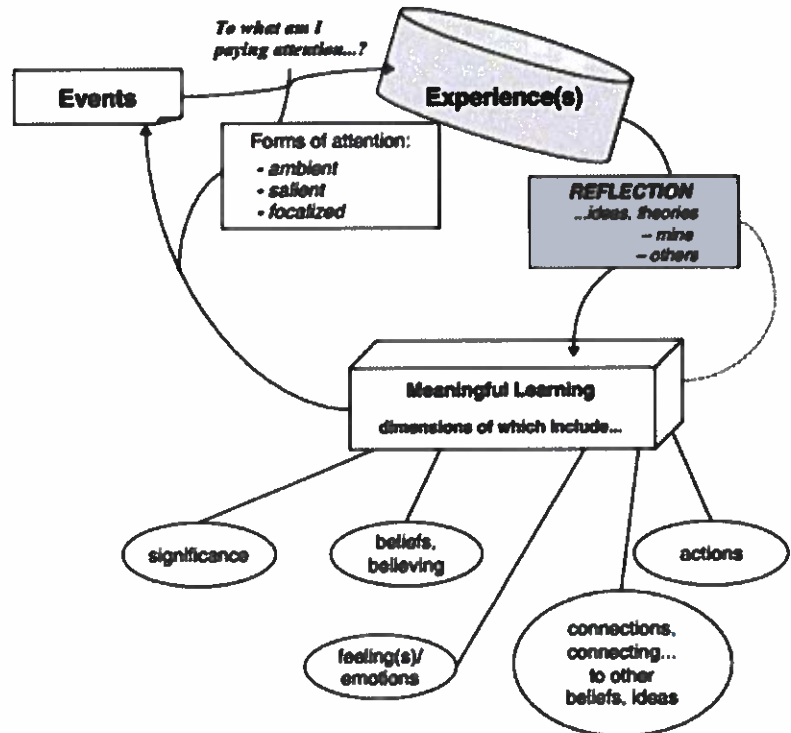
We may have a new **Event**, like Kolb in the automobile museum. Kolb's **attention** gets pulled in certain ways, he may already have some kind of focus based on what he knew of automobiles before he went to the museum that shapes his **Experience**, so he focused on some things more than others. Later on, he **reflects** on his experience and realizes, "Wow, I did not know there were so many other kinds of automobiles like those without engines!"

That is what made going to the museum a meaningful learning experience. Kolb realized not only something new, but he revised his own concept of automobile, his beliefs, because of the Event and the Experience.

What gets your attention in a new experience?

Attention triggers may be **ambient** - related to your immediate surroundings; **salient** - things that are most important to you; **focalized** - concentrating on a main point of interest.

Figure 7.1. Events Model of Learning from Experience



New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education • DOI: 10.1802/ace

Figure 7.1 from Fiddler, Morris, & Marienau, Catherine. (2008, summer). Developing habits of reflection for meaningful learning. In, S. Reed & C. Marienau (Eds.), Linking adults with community: Promoting civic engagement through community-based learning. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 118. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 75-85.



Photo of Catherine Marienau from: <http://www.facebook.com/people/Catherine-Marienau/519408791>

Photo of Morry Fiddler from: http://utnews.utoledo.edu/index.php/04_12_2011/adult-learning-expert-to-speak-april-13

Three Plateaus in Adult Mental Development (Teams and Leaders)

Here's another conceptual framework to help you reflect and think about learning. When we think about how our context, especially our social context, can influence how we learn, one conclusion we might come to is that at times we behave as either followers or leaders. In their work on reflective learning, Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey describe a developmental process in terms of leadership. Consider yourself in different situations and how the model applies to you, especially you as a "self-transforming mind"?

Notice the contrast between the self-authoring mind (**leader learns to lead**) and the self-transforming mind (**leader leads to learn**). Good leaders are great listeners and they are open to learning from others.

Are you a team player or are you an agenda-driven, independent leader....or are you moving toward being an interdependent, self-transforming leader?

From Subject to Object: A Constructive-Developmental Approach to Reflective Practice

Three plateaus in adult mental development

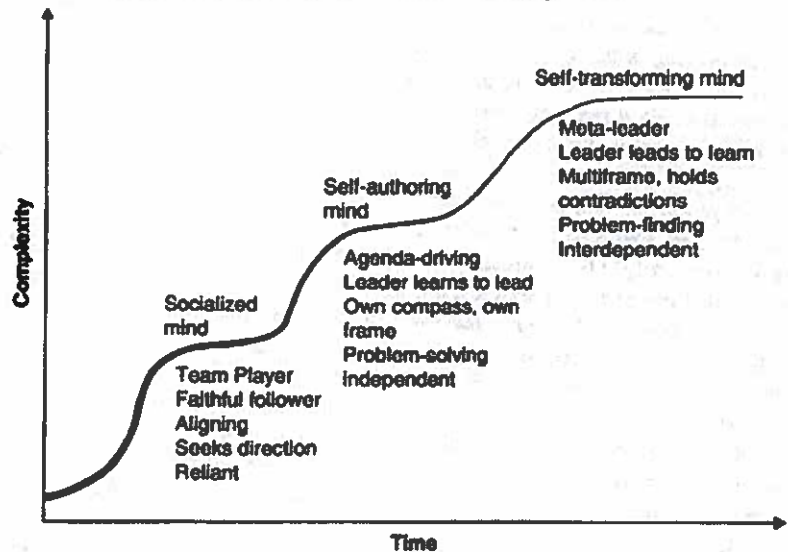


Fig. 22.1 Three plateaus of mental complexity

From: Kegan, Robert. & Lahey, Lisa Laskow (2010). From subject to object: A constructive-developmental approach to reflective practice (chapter 22, pp. 433-449) in Nona Lyons (Ed.) Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry. New York: Springer.



Photo of Robert Kegan from: <http://midwest.antioch.edu/images/rkegan.jpg>

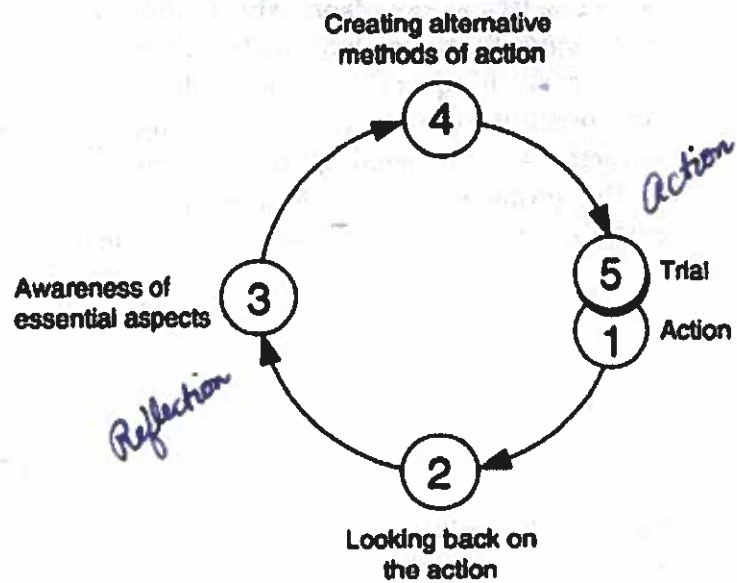
Photo of Lisa Laskow Lahey from: http://www.wildfirelessons.net/LLCimages/Lisa_sm.jpg

The Feedback Loop between Reflection and Action (Korthagen & Vasalos)

Two other education theorists, Korthagen and Vasalos, describe the process of self-transformation through learning experiences and reflection on those experiences as a **feedback loop**.

Note the phases one can go through in analyzing, describing and reflecting on previous experiences. We have some action that we undertake, we look back on it, we become aware of essential aspects of it (aspects that we might not have been fully aware of when we were "in the moment" of the action itself), and we create and think up new alternative modes of action.

The idea here is that **reflective learning is a developmental process**, a process in which we see what works and what doesn't work, and we modify what we do based on how it is working, over and over again, perhaps all the time:



From: Korthagen, Fred A.J., & Vasalos, Angelo (2010). Going to the core: Deepening reflection by connecting the person to the profession (Chapter 27, in Nona Lyons (Ed.) Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry. New York: Springer.)



Photo of Fred A.J. Korthagen from: http://www.corereflexion.org/Media/medewerkers/Fred_Korthagen.jpg

Photo of Angelo Vasalos from: <http://www.corereflexion.org/Media/Afbeelding%20Angelo1.jpg>

Self-Transformation through Core Qualities (Korthagen & Vasalos)

Putting the feedback loop together with your own Degree plan and larger goals in the onion model, we can use Korthagen and Vasalos's conceptual framework to reflect on specific "**core qualities**" that you would like to develop within yourself.

This idea of self-transformation and cultivating new qualities and new knowledge for yourself is going to be a key aspect of the last Reflective Seminar, ORGL 4000, and the Capstone course, ORGL 4690.

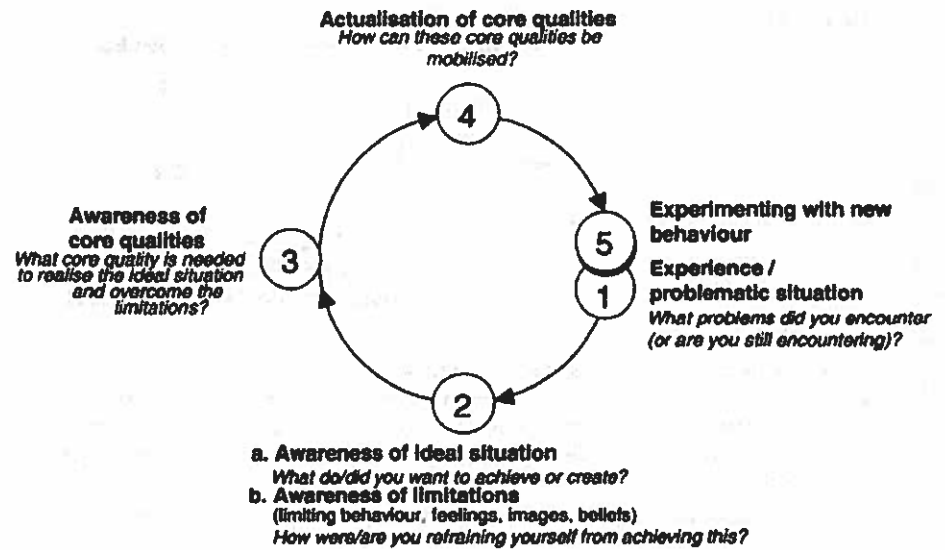


Fig. 27.5 Phase model of Core Reflection (Korthagen and Vasalos 2005)

Don't worry if you don't feel like you have a full understanding of all of these conceptual models at this time; the idea is to give you a sense of the big picture. As you progress through the Discussions and Assignments, you will gain a deeper understanding of the various models. You will also find there are specific models that actually work better for the different Reflective Seminars and for the Capstone.

From: Korthagen, Fred A.J., & Vasalos, Angelo (2010). Going to the core: Deepening reflection by connecting the person to the profession (Chapter 27, in Nona Lyons (Ed.) Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry. New York: Springer.)

The Onion Model: Reflection on your own Goals and Degree Program (Korthagen & Vasalos)

Korthagen and Vasalos also provide a useful way to ask yourself a series of questions that will help you to analyze and understand your own big picture, your self, your understanding of your experiences and your abilities, and the context in which you must work to achieve your goals. You can begin in the center and work your way outward. Another way to use this diagram is to start at the outside ring (in your Environment - What happens that triggers your reflection?) then gradually work your way toward the center... to Why are you here?

Either approach can work. The important point is to ask yourself critical questions as you think about yourself and your goals.

These are the kinds of questions that are found in the Discussions and Assignments of the ORGL seminars.

27 Going to the Core: Deepening Reflection by Connecting the Person to the Profession

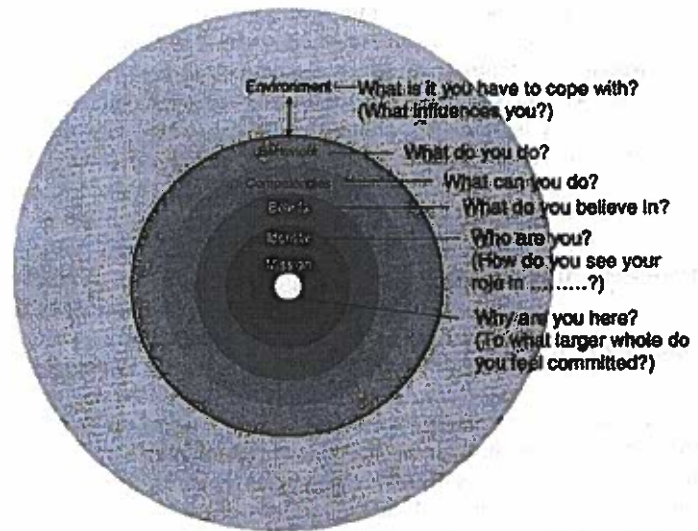


Fig. 27.4 The onion model showing six levels of reflection (© Korthagen and Vasalos 2005)

From: Korthagen, Fred A.J., & Vasalos, Angelo (2010). Going to the core: Deepening reflection by connecting the person to the profession (Chapter 27, in Nona Lyons (Ed.) Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry. New York: Springer.)



Photo of Fred A.J. Korthagen from: http://www.corereflexion.org/Media/medewerkers/Fred_Korthagen.jpg

Photo of Angelo Vasalos from: <http://www.corereflexion.org/Media/Afbeelding%20Angelo1.jpg>

The Three Phases of Reflection and the Self in Kolb

To the right is one of Kolb's diagrams describing how this process of reflective learning is developmental, how it actually develops the self, and gives you new ways of interacting with the world. To read a diagram like this, imagine yourself moving up the diagram from the bottom in the same direction as the arrow on the left side. Then read the different descriptions of the self on the right side. Our three Reflective Seminars, ORGL 3000, 3050 and 4000, correspond to these three phases.

In ORGL 3000, you focus on yourself as an "acquisition" phase learner. You analyze your own assumptions, beliefs and feelings as they relate to specific learning experiences. As you develop more skill, more ability to work with complex ideas, with other people, with a social and physical context, you enter the ORGL 3050 "specialization" phase. You are aware of disagreements and other ideas more in this phase, and your learning experiences will involve negotiating those differences as you interact with the world. The third phase, of "integration", is the more mature phase in which you have learned more about how to interact with the world and you are able to transform, to adapt, to new situations and new schools of thought. In ORGL 4000 you will be writing about this level of self and reflection. In the Capstone course, ORGL 4690, you will be focusing on how your previous experiences and learning connect and integrate with your current degree program.

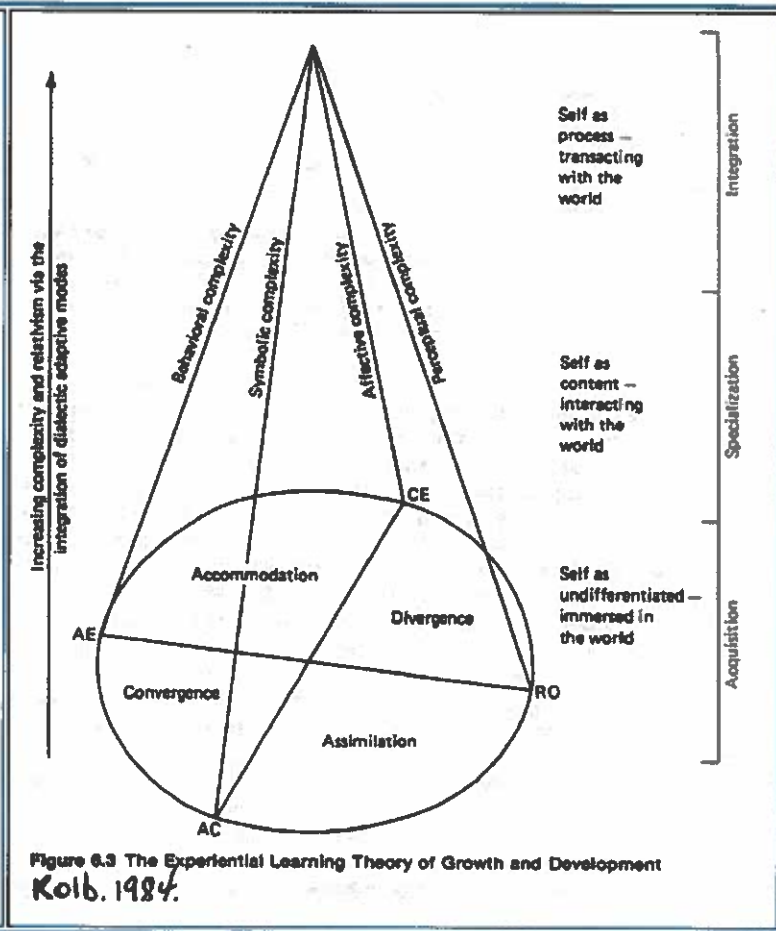


Figure 6.3 from Kolb, David A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.



Photo of David A. Kolb from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:David_Kolb.png

Kolb: A Complex Set of Ideas about How We Learn

In case you were wondering how complex Kolb's own conceptual scheme gets, here it is! Don't worry, you don't have to memorize the whole thing. But just think about how it might make sense to reflect on how we learn using this kind of set of concepts. **Take a look at the line that mentions "Concrete Experience" on the left side, about eight lines down.** See how the movement is from the left to the right: we start out with direct sensing and feeling in the world, then we develop self-awareness about our own values, then we can differentiate others' beliefs and feelings, and eventually we feel a commitment to our own values while at the same time appreciating differences of opinion in our broader social context. What our courses are helping you to become more aware of this process in yourself. **In the first phase you are in the Acquisition stage,** moving to Specialization, then to Integration.

Kolb, David A. Table 6.1. Experiential Learning Theory. Levels of Adaptation and the Structure of Consciousness

Developmental stage of maturation	Acquisition			Specialization			Integration		
Level of adaptation	Performance			Learning			Development		
Structure of consciousness	Registrative			Interpretative			Integrative		
Extension in time	Seconds	Minutes	Hours	Days	Weeks	Months	Years	Decades	Lifetimes
Extension in life space	Responses	Acts	Tasks	Projects	Jobs	Occupations	Careers	Lives	Generations
Feedback structure	Goal-directed first-order feedback to achieve goals			Learning how to learn, 2 nd -order feedback to change goals & strategies			Consciousness/integrity; 3 rd -order feedback to link goals to life purpose		
Hierarchic integration of learning modes:	Many differentiated structures with low integration between them			Fewer but larger specialized structures; high integration within structures; low integration between structures			Development of complementary specialized structures; high integration between structures		
Concrete experience – effective complexity via apprehension	Direct sensing and feeling	Continuity of sensation and feeling – emergence of enduring sentiments		Self-aware system of sentiments and values	Differentiating self's & others' sentiments and values		Relativistic appreciation of value systems	Value commitment within relativism	
Reflective observation – Perceptual complexity via intention	Attention	Watching – development of continuous images		Reflection: giving observations personal meaning	Creating alternative meaning and observation schemes		Relativistic appreciation of different meaning schemes & points of view	Intuition; choosing meaningful perspectives	
Abstract conceptualization – Symbolic complexity via comprehension	Recognizing; enactive thought	Object constancy; "iconic" thought		Concrete symbolic operations	Formal hypothetic-deductive reasoning		Attaching concrete meanings to symbol systems	Finding and solving meaningful problems	
Active experimentation – behavioral complexity via extension	Responding to circumstances	Doing: short-range intentional acts toward goals		Achieving: development of clear goals and longer-range	Risk taking: Making goal & strategy tradeoffs		Experimental hypothesis testing: change goals & strategies based on results	Responsible action: accepting unknown emergent reality	

Table 6.1 from Kolb, David A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.



Photo of David A. Kolb from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:David_Kolb.png

Another Kolb Diagram: From Focus, to Abstract Conceptualization and Greater Complexity

Here's another way to visualize the process Kolb is describing.

Imagine yourself having experiences that move you down this diagram, starting with specific experiences in which you are focused on some particular thing, idea, assumption, or theory you hold. Then, through convergence and assimilation, through experiences and reflections, you move to a more complex understanding of the issue, you move to a greater symbolic complexity – you learn because your conceptual scheme gets more complex and multi-faceted.

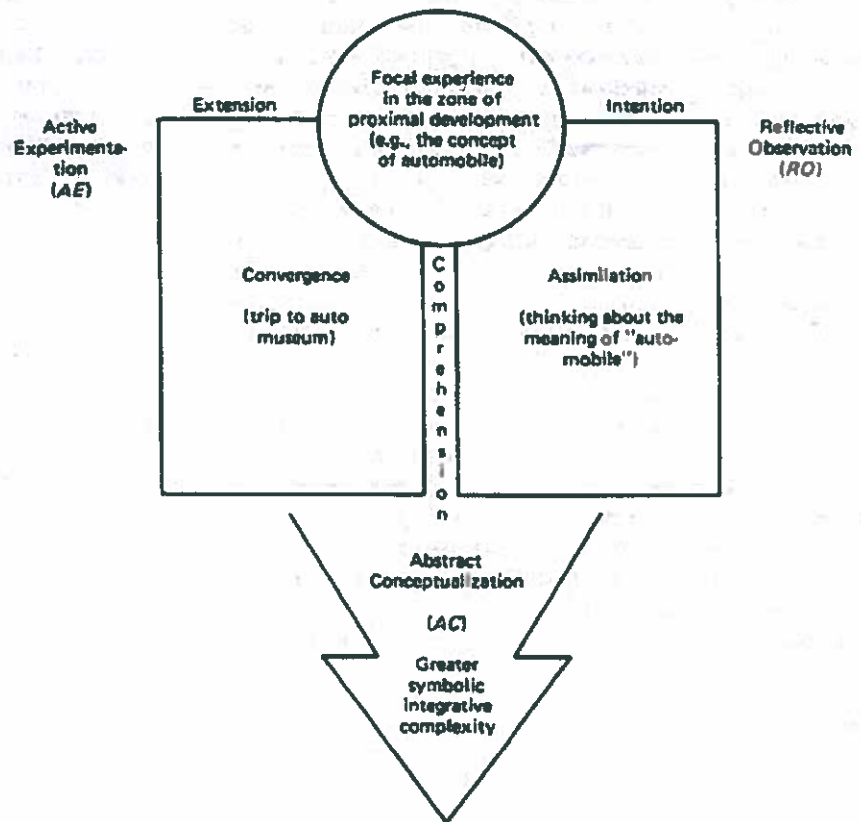


Figure 6.4

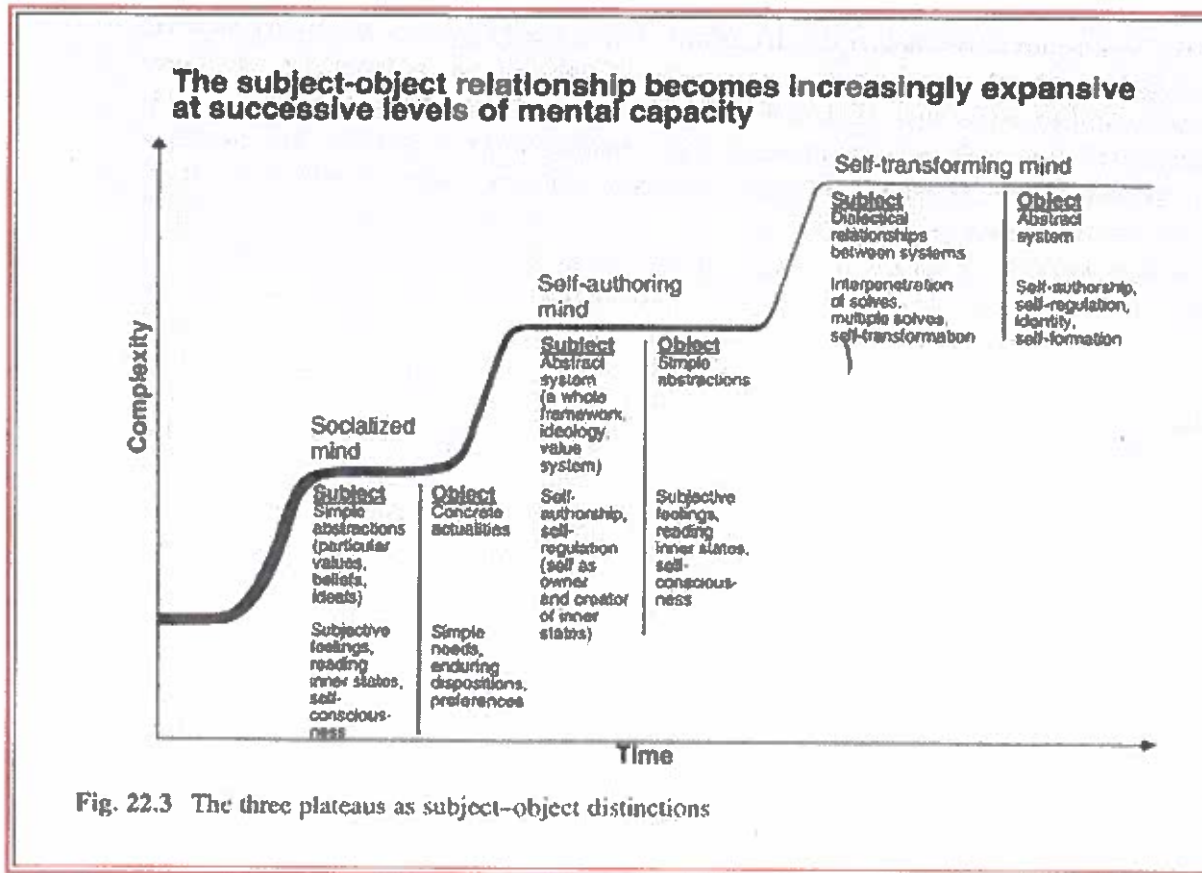
Figure 6.4 from Kolb, David A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.



Photo of David A. Kolb from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:David_Kolb.png

Three Phases Part II: Subject and Object (Kegan & Lahey)

One of the interesting aspects of Kegan and Lahey's conceptual framework is that they ask us to look at our self in two ways. At each level of the developmental process, we are both a subject (as in a thinking subject, the subject "I" in the sentence "I think") and as an object, something that can be studied, as in "the object of one's attention":



From: Kegan, Robert, & Lahey, Lisa Laskow (2010). From subject to object: A constructive-developmental approach to reflective practice (chapter 22, pp. 433-449) in Nona Lyons (Ed.) Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry. New York: Springer.



Photo of Robert Kegan from: <http://midwest.antioch.edu/images/rkegan.jpg>

Photo of Lisa Laskow Lahey from: http://www.wildfirelessons.net/LLCImages/Lisa_sm.jpg

Socialized, Self-Authoring, Self-Transforming Minds (Kegan & Lahey)

Kegan and Lahey further describe these stages (or orders of consciousness) as shifting from emphasizing our own beliefs and ideas in the first place (**socialized mind**),

to a gradual ability to step back and look at our beliefs in a broader context (**self-authoring mind**), and

then finally being able to see the limitations in our own belief system and acknowledge the values in other's ideas (**self-transforming mind**).

The Socialized Mind 3rd Order of Consciousness

- We are shaped by the definitions and expectations of our interpersonal environment.
- Our self coheres by its alignment with / loyalty to that with which it has uncritically become identified.
- This can primarily express itself in our relationships with people or ideas and beliefs, or both.

The Self-Authoring Mind 4th Order of Consciousness

- We are able to step back enough from the social environment to generate an internal "seat of judgment" or personal authority, which evaluates and makes choices about external expectations.
- Our self coheres by its alignment with / its own belief system / ideology / personal code; by its ability to self-direct, take stands, set limits, create and regulate its boundaries on behalf of its own voice.

The Self-Transforming Mind 5th Order of Consciousness

- We can step back from and reflect on the limits of our own ideology or personal authority; see that any one system or self-organization is in some way partial or incomplete; be friendlier toward contradiction and opposition; seek to hold onto multiple systems rather than projecting all but one onto the other.
- Our self coheres through its ability to distinguish internal consistency from wholeness or completeness; its alignment with the dialectic rather than either pole.

From: Kegan, Robert, & Lahey, Lisa Laskow (2010). From subject to object: A constructive-developmental approach to reflective practice (chapter 22, pp. 433-449) in Nona Lyons (Ed.) Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry. New York: Springer.



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